

and will man and beast come closer together than on the side of the intellect.

The miracles of the insect-world furnish an immeasurably rich source of material, inviting further investigations through their relative simplicity which makes them more easily accessible to an empirical analytical method. I will refer to single chapters of Fabre's like that on the musical instruments of the locusts; to experiments in the poison of scorpions resulting in the discovery that the sting which was fatal to the matured insect was of only slight injury to the larva; to the fertilization of the emperor moth which we know is accomplished by a fine pollen which the male has brought from miles away.

Thus we become acquainted with systems of reflexes adapted to different ends, which for this reason cannot act together in their combination as a unity toward one end as in the case of the vertebrate. It seldom happens with them that the death of one of the partners takes place in the transport accompanying the act of pairing, whereas in the case of spiders, beetles and grasshoppers the usually weaker male is very often, or almost regularly, eaten.

In spite, however, of this psychological difference, in spite of this enormous disparity, we must not believe it is not an advantage to the study of human psychology to observe the lower animals. On the contrary, whoever understands how to observe the single reflexes taken separately will also know how to combine and unite them in the case of the higher animal, man.

In a subject which is so rich and varied and possesses so many possibilities and conceptions I may close with the words of Solon:

πᾶσιν ἀδείν χαλεπόν.

THE SOLDIER-WOMEN OF MEXICO.

BY VINCENT STARRETT.

ON May 20, 1914, the Associated Press correspondent in the City of Mexico sent the following dispatch from Estacion Amargos:

"Women, who follow every Mexican army, took a prominent part in the fight at Zartuche. As the federal soldiers swarmed from the cars some of the women dragged out and broke open boxes of ammunition, carrying the cartridges to the federal soldiers in the face of the constitutionalist fire. Others crouched on the iron

roofs of the cars, took up the rifles of the wounded and loaded and fired with all the coolness and determination of veterans.

"A party of the women made a desperate effort to bring a machine gun on one of the flat cars to bear on the constitutionalist troops, but before they could swing the muzzle and place the cartridge clips in position the soldiers had surrendered and the constitutionalists had swarmed over the sides of the car."

In every conflict instances have not been lacking that the Amazons of old are still accessories to the terrible game of War. From the Russian battle front and from some of the Balkan states comes word of women warriors in blouse and boots, fighting as desperately as ever did the men. The Mexican survival, however, is another matter and is not to be judged by the same standards. In most recent instances patriotism (i. e., love of country) has been the guiding flame of female participants; in Mexico, where patriotism is, at best, an erratic flame, another passion must be ascribed.

Properly, the Mexican *soldadera* is a camp follower, and her primary function is the world-old function of her kind. She is a part of the army, a part of the nation and a part of the Mexican system of things, and in a study of the whole she must be considered. Psychologically, she is vastly more interesting than the *soldado*. Often she rises to the height described by the correspondent in the preceding dispatch, but more often she does not.

A *soldado* is a soldier. A *soldadera* is a woman who follows the army and the *soldado*. In Chicago, in certain circumstances, she would be fined \$25 and costs and sent to the house of correction. In Mexico she is an institution, recognized and something more than tolerated. Her standing in the army, of course, is unofficial, but there are hundreds of her—thousands—almost as many as there are *soldados*.

The *soldadera* has been treated rather more charitably and lovingly under another name by Ouida. The Mexican *soldadera* is no *Cigarette*, however, and she lacks utterly the glamor of the *vivandière*. The tendency of the romanticist is to exalt her virtues, properly enough, while glossing over her vices. In the following poem entitled "*La Cantinera*,"¹ James Stanley Gilbert has done just this, but also he has placed his finger squarely on her *raison d'être* and the primary cause of it.

"As she scrambled down from the transport's deck,
Her figure parodied grace;

¹ *Panama Patchwork*: Poems by James Stanley Gilbert. Ninth thousand. New York: The Trow Press, 1911.

Eighteen at the most and a physical wreck,
Yet she had an angel's face!
From head to foot
Clung dirt and soot—
There was dirt on her angel's face.
—Yes, dirt on her angel's face!

“Her hair in inky loops hung low
O'er a soldier's canvas coat,
And a tattered shift yawned wide to show
A short and sunburned throat!
No lingerie—
We all could see
Her short and sunburned throat!
—Yes, more than her sunburned throat!

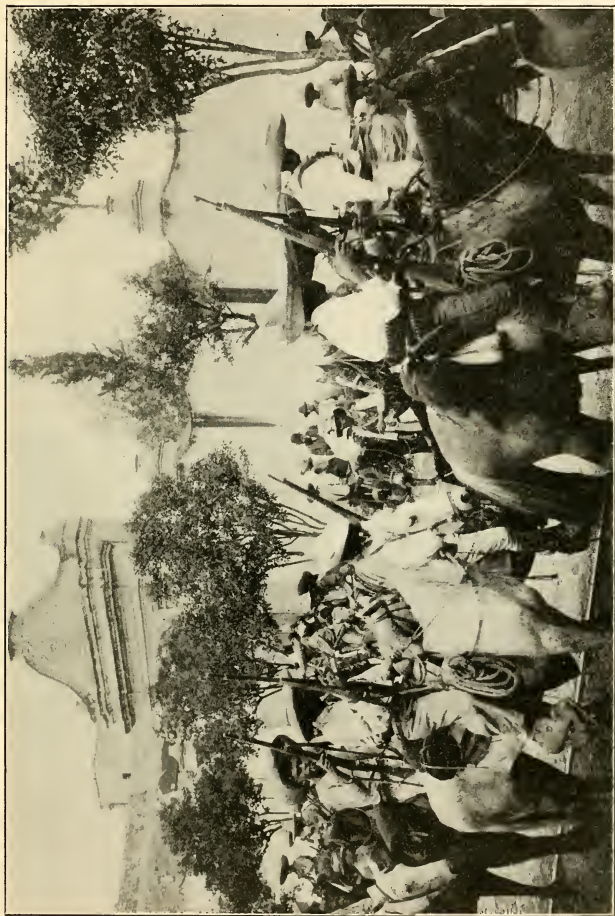
“Her dress—her what? She had no dress;
Call it skirt for lack of a name—
(’Tis a guess, the wildest kind of a guess)
Put shamelessness to shame!
So scanty and torn
And carelessly worn,
It put shamelessness to shame!
—Yes, shamelessness to shame!

“She gathered her kit and passed us by
Foul bedding and pots and bags;
A babe on her hip—another one nigh—
Nakedness, filth and rags!
On the endless tramp
From camp to camp,
In nakedness, filth and rags!
—Yes, nakedness, filth and rags!

“A drab and a drudge—a regiment's Thing
To abuse, debauch, debase;
And yet—as though guarded by Beauty's wing—
Her face was an angel's face!
Though sadly bedimmed,
'Twas Beauty who limned
The lines of her angel's face!
—Yes, modelled her angel's face!

“What of it, you ask? Oh, nothing but this;—
I think it not often the case
That one clearly beholds in ignorance, bliss,
And 'tis proved by an angel's face!
For ignorance
Of innocence,
Shone from her angel's face!
—Yes, gave her an angel's face!”

Gilbert, I believe, was not writing about a Mexican woman, but the slattern heroine of his crude and powerful canvas is dis-



TYPICAL MEXICAN SOLDIERS (Cavalry). Far back to the left may be seen some of their women.

tinctly of the *genre*. Heaven forbid that I should go on record as having found the beauty he describes, in the Mexican *soldadera*;

still I have encountered just such types—such exceptions—and his lines are particularly valuable for their final suggestion. Ignorance of innocence—that, at least, is beautifully descriptive of the curious, hopeless creature I am endeavoring to present.

But if, like the "Absent-Minded Beggar," her "weaknesses are great," her virtues are many and should merit some respect.

The Mexican idea of making a soldier is to pour him into a uniform, give him a rifle and let him fight as best he can. He is largely a product of the press gang, seized from street and field, more often than not is an Indian of the very lowest peon class and abysmally low in the intellectual scale. Frequently he is a convict released from the *cuartel* on the condition that he join the army. It is patent, therefore, that his woman cannot be expected to produce a birth certificate or a marriage contract or a genealogy dating from Cortez.

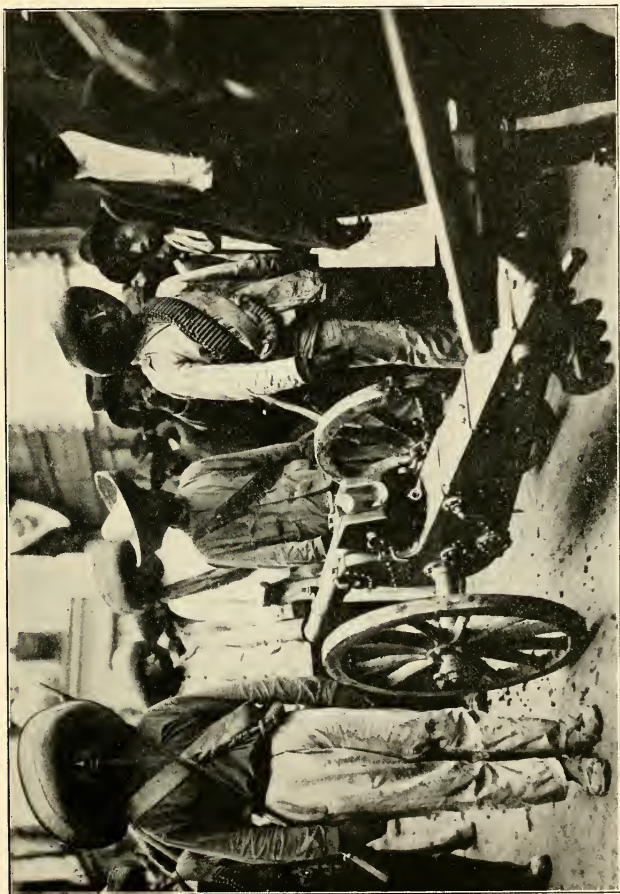
In point of fact, however, she is often his wife, *de facto*, and faithful to the vows she did not take. Frequently, again, she is neither his wife nor faithful. Always, she is a paradoxical creature to be accepted for what she is and not to be analyzed, vivisected or understood.

When a Mexican army goes to war considerable recruiting is necessary to bring it up to even nominal strength. The unhappy Indian, torn from the plow or dragged from prison to fight for "his country," has only a short time to get together his portable goods, including his family. Fortunately, there is little to be done; he whistles for his dog and his woman; the bugle sounds, and the "army" moves forward, leaden-footed, with a forlorn wake of women and children and donkeys, staggering beneath the weight of pots and pans and the sting of fly and whip.

Now the strange psychology of the true *soldadera* becomes apparent. She may have many admirers, whose transitory affection moves her not a jot. Ordinarily (exceptions cheerfully granted) she has only one lover—one "husband"—her man, her *Juan*. He may or may not be her husband, but at any rate he is her *Juan*, her chosen one, and him she adores with the unreasoning love of a dog that clings to a brutal master.

For him crimes may be committed without remorse. Remorse is an emotion she has never felt. She will beg, she will borrow, she will steal for him. It is said that she will not hesitate to take a life for him. On the battlefield she will be at his side whenever it is possible, and she has been known to seize his rifle when he has

fallen and fight over his body with an Amazonian fury equaled only by a mother wild beast defending her young.



TYPICAL MEXICAN SOLDIERS IN THE STREETS OF MEXICO CITY.

After the conflict she is a bustling bundle of energy, unpacking the kettles and the pans and preparing a meal for her adored one.

She rests not until he is comfortable. Her babe, even, is a secondary consideration when her lover is near.

It may be a parade one is watching in the white streets of the capital. It may be the crack regiment that is marching by the reviewing stand with waving banners and beating drums. More interesting than the brown *soldados* in the street are the brown *soldaderas* on the sidewalk, keeping pace with the regiment as it sweeps along, awaiting the end of the march or a temporary halt, that they may rush forth to "their men" and press a canteen or a pannikin of cooling water to their lips.

This may be said for the private soldier of Mexico: He does not flaunt his women in the streets of the city when he is off duty. Not so the officers. When I was in Mexico for the second time in the spring of 1915, the hotels of Vera Cruz were filled with dapper officers and their women. They paraded the streets in their showy attire or reclined gracefully, side by side, in the ancient victorias which are the most popular vehicles of locomotion in the port. In a majority of instances, I was informed, the officers' wives were in other cities.

"Where," I asked, "do these women come from? They are young and many of them are pretty. And there are hundreds of them."

My companion, a hardened mining engineer with fifteen years of turbulent Mexican experience behind him, smiled peculiarly.

"You will recall," he remarked, "that after the fall of the empire a washerwoman came into power."

Yet these officers' women are not the true *soldaderas*. They exist, but theirs is another case. They are younger and more attractive physically, but they are older in experience and sin. And theirs is distinctly the sin of the legal code, for, unlike the authentic *soldadera*, it may not be claimed for them that they are "ignorant of innocence." Intellectually, they are above the *soldadera*; morally, they are far, far below her.

The *soldadera* is not immoral; she is unmoral. She has not forgotten; she never knew. With her, ignorance is truly bliss, for her ignorance is truly ignorance of innocence.

Poor brutalized, degenerate sloven! She is yet the most loyal and faithful part of a faithless army!